

Name: Harold Arthur BRAY



Service No: 42151

Armed Force: NZ Army

Enlistment: 1941 Timaru Lorry Driver

Training:

Embarkations: NZ Ordnance Corps Second

Expeditionary Force

Rank/s: Private

Service:

CIVILIAN LIFE

Next of Kin on Embarkation: Mr. S P Bray Sherwood Downs Fairlie

Relationship Status: Father

MILITARY DECORATIONS

Medals and Awards: War Medal 1939-1945, New Zealand War Service Medal

OTHER DETAILS

Date of Birth & Place: 28 August 1916

Date of Death & Place: 14 August 1984

Cause of Death:

Burial/Cremation: Fairlie Cemetery

Age: 68

Memorial:

Timaru Herald, Volume CXLIX, Issue 21909, 11 March 1941, Page 8

SOLDIERS ENTERTAINED

Residents of Sherwood Downs presented Trooper H. A. Bray with an inscribed fountain pen.

Trooper Eric Ellis and Private R. O'Reilly were guests of honour at a complimentary social at Allandale and were presented with a fountain pen each.

The Mackenzie Highland Pipe Band presented Drummer C. SurrIDGE with a razor as a small token of esteem.

MILITARY SERVICE BIOGRAPHY:

Harold Bray aka H.A. Bray was born 28th Aug. 1916 in Fairlie and grew up on the run "Lilydale", on Sherwood Downs, Fairlie. "Lilydale" was named after his mother Lily Anne Henrietta Bray nee Worthington. Dad's father, S.P. Bray, was a sheep farmer. Warren, eldest son, Godfrey Victor, Nelson T. and Edgar were Dad's brothers. All attended Fairlie School and Warren, Nelson, Harold and Godfrey served with the Canterbury Yeomanry Cavalry (CYC) for about four years in the 1930s. They grew up riding horses on Sherwood Downs. Their sisters were Enid, Lorna, Bessie and Shirley. Nelson was a 39ner, with the NZ Army, first Echelon, enlisted in 1939 and saw service in Greece and the North Africa. In Greece Nelson escaped with the last of the rear guard so missed out on going to Crete. He was also with the ambulance trucks on the front line during the battle of Sidi Rezegh and avoided capture. Godfrey aka Vic Bray enlisted soon after and saw service in Greece, Crete and the North Africa and was the only one injured, losing an eye and arm, injured from a booby trap on a down Messerschmitt German plane in the Western Desert. A German doctor who was a POW operated on Godfrey and removed his eye.

Edgar stayed on the farm on Sherwood Downs and later saw service in Japan with the J-Force.

Dad enlisted for active service 4th January 1940. Dad left to go to camp at Trentham 6th Jan. 1941. He returned 19 April 1945 after seeing service in North Africa and Italy as a truck driver. He came back and purchased a run "Ribbonwood" on Sherwood Downs in 1947, married Mum in 1948, met in Wellington when Dad was at Trentham, when Mum was working in a Red Cross canteen. Dad retired from farming in 1982 and moved to Levels just out of Timaru.

From one of Dad's diaries. Embarked for overseas service on 6th April 1941, sailed 7th April and arrived at Sydney 10th April. No leave there. In convoy with the Amsterdam and Mauritania. Escorts: Achilles, Hobart, Australia.

11th April Left Sydney for Freemantle. Convoy: Queen Mary, Queen Elizabeth, Amsterdam, Mauritania, Isle of France. Escort: Australia.

13th April Passed through the Bass Strait

16th April Arrived at Fremantle

16th April Leave to Perth. Aussies gave us a great welcome in their town.

17th April Leave to Perth

18th April Anchored out in the harbour

19th April Set sail for Singapore, Escort: Australia

22nd April Left main convoy and set sail to Singapore. Just the Amsterdam, the escort was Dauntless.

24th April Arrived at Singapore Naval Base

25th April ANZAC Day, transhipped onto the hellship, Aquitania and she was as hot as hell.

27th April Set sail for Colombo. Aquitania and the H.M.S Durham.

1st May Arrived at Colombo. Meet part of the old convoy, Isle of France and the Mauritania.

2nd until 4th May Leave.

6th May Left Colombo for Port Foorfest. Started off with the Leander as escort, she rushed off to help the Cornwall to sink a raider, in the Indian Ocean. Sailed through the Red Sea without escort.

Service Person Record & Images: Military Service Years

13th May Landed at Egypt. 23 day actually sailing time

15th May Disembarked to go into camp at Garwi, twenty miles from Cairo

17th May Met Nelson

18th May Crossed the boarded and saw Nelson in his own camp.

19th May Peter Fraser [NZ PM] visited us at Garwi

20th May Major King paid us a visit. He is in charge of the Ordinance M.E..

27 May Meals at Garwi were better than Trentham but when we ate, we had a ½ ton of sand with it. We dined out on the sand in the sandstorms etc. and the heat was a bastard, 120 deg. in the shade.

28th May Packed up at Garwi to go to Maadi to start our infantry training with the 32nd Battalion

1 June Went to Church for the first time in Egypt

2 June Geoff turned up to see me at my hut after coming out of Crete, I was out

3 June Geoff and myself met for the first time

10 June Met Geoff in Cairo and then went out to the Pyramids

15 June Nelson, Geoff, Hughie Morrison from Albury, Joe Casey and myself met for the first time together.

18 June Transferred to the 32 nd Bt B Company (Wellington) for a while

31 June Received our firearms 303. They had no equipment for us when we first landed here.

22 July Met Percy Carlton from Fairlie.

27 July Receive my first Patriotic parcel. Packet of Creamota, Pad, tin of fruit, condense milk, barley sugar, boot laces, handkerchief, razor blades, ziz zio paper, 2ozs tin of tobacco, foot powder, rich xmas cake.

28 July Experience my first air raid about 3 enemy bomber were in action, search lights shot up into the air. Send ack, ack, after fire, shell was bursting above our heads, about 10pm at night time. Saw a bomb land, it lit up everything all around.

27 Sep Took ill with Pneumonia so light duty.

1942 14 Jan Goeff was wounded

1 Feb Heard about Geoff being in the Helman Hospital.

7 Apr Left Maadi camp to go to Syria and left about ten o'clock with about a little over a hundred trucks in the convoy. About six o'clock in the afternoon we were travelling through the desert, then all of a sudden, we came upon the canal, that was beautiful. We crossed the canal by bridge and just on the other side. We camped the night in the desert doing a 100 miles that day.

14 Sep Posted to the CCS

8 Nov Left Burg el Arab for Gorora passed Alamein, Daba, and Faka. These places were marked with a sign post, it was the only way we could pick these places out. All along the road were all burnt trucks, tanks etc. A lot of the equipment look to be very old, all the trucks which was not burned were raided by the boys but by the time our boys got to the trucks there was very little left for us.

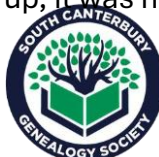
10 Nov. The day after Martha was taken, I had a tour of inspection of the village. That was 10th of Nov. Actually, we were looking for water.

18th Nov. Left Gorora for Tobruk. Arrived in the Tobruk area on the 20th Nov.

7 Dec Advance part moved up to Benghazi. I was posted to a Dodge 15 cwt, P.U

8 Dec Left Tobruk and moved up the Derma Rd.

2 Dec Air raid at 7 o'clock, ack-ack went up, it was no doubt it was a great show.



Service Person Record & Images: Military Service Years

The sky was full of flaming onions, also Jerry let down twenty four flares. A man did not feel all together safe with the flares coming down from the ack-ack shells. Laid two eggs and a search light battery, kill ten men. Also, a spot of strafing along the road, it could be worst. After that it did not take the army long to get a few balloons.

10 Dec The Tommy CCS turned on breakfast for us, two small pieces of bacon, cup of tea plus two biscuits.

3 Apr Attached to 4 Field Ambulance for a few days. Returned to heavy section then returned to light section just as the sun was going down when 5 or 6 Jerry planes came over. Jerry was over from 3.30 today and back in the morning letting go his load of death.

(Source:) Daughter Olwyn Whitehouse

Timaru Herald, Volume CXLIX, Issue 21967, 20 May 1941, Page 3

FAIRLIE

PERSONAL Mr S. P. Bray has received cabled advice that his three sons, Nelson, Godfrey and Harold, who are with the forces overseas, have returned to Egypt.

Timaru Herald, Volume CLI, Issue 22164, 7 January 1942, Page 3

PERSONAL Advice has been received by Mr S. P. Bray that his sons Godfrey, and Nelson Bray have been through the Libyan campaign, and are both safe. His son Harold is also reported as being safe.

WAR SERVICE IMAGES:





Continental Hotel, Cassino



Egypt, Maadi camp, Rodney McLean, Joe Casey, Hugh Morrison, Godfrey Bray.

Service Person Record & Images: Military Service Years



Forlì, Italy. WWII. Harold, Snubber, Mac, Sunny



Jeep - N. Africa.



A mishap at Presenzano. Happy Johnson, Dug, Aussie Cruse, Jim



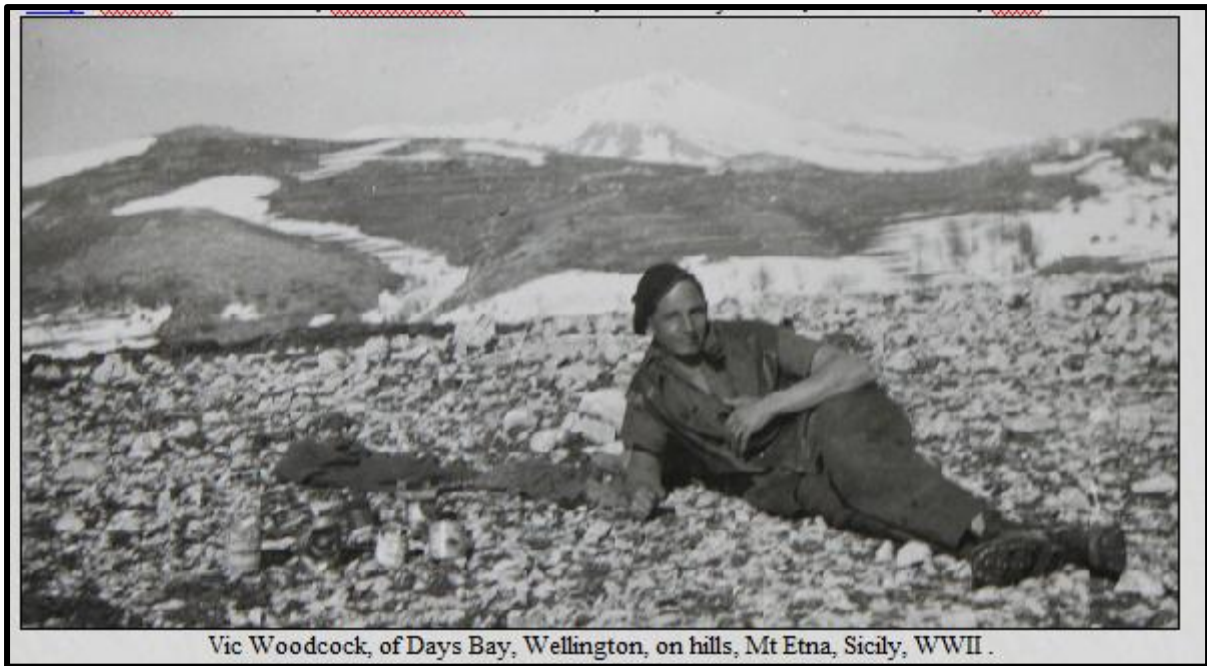
Our home at Sienna. Harold, Snubber, Mac. A lemon squeezer on the tent.



Our home at Sienna. Harold, Snubber, Mac. A lemon squeezer on the tent.

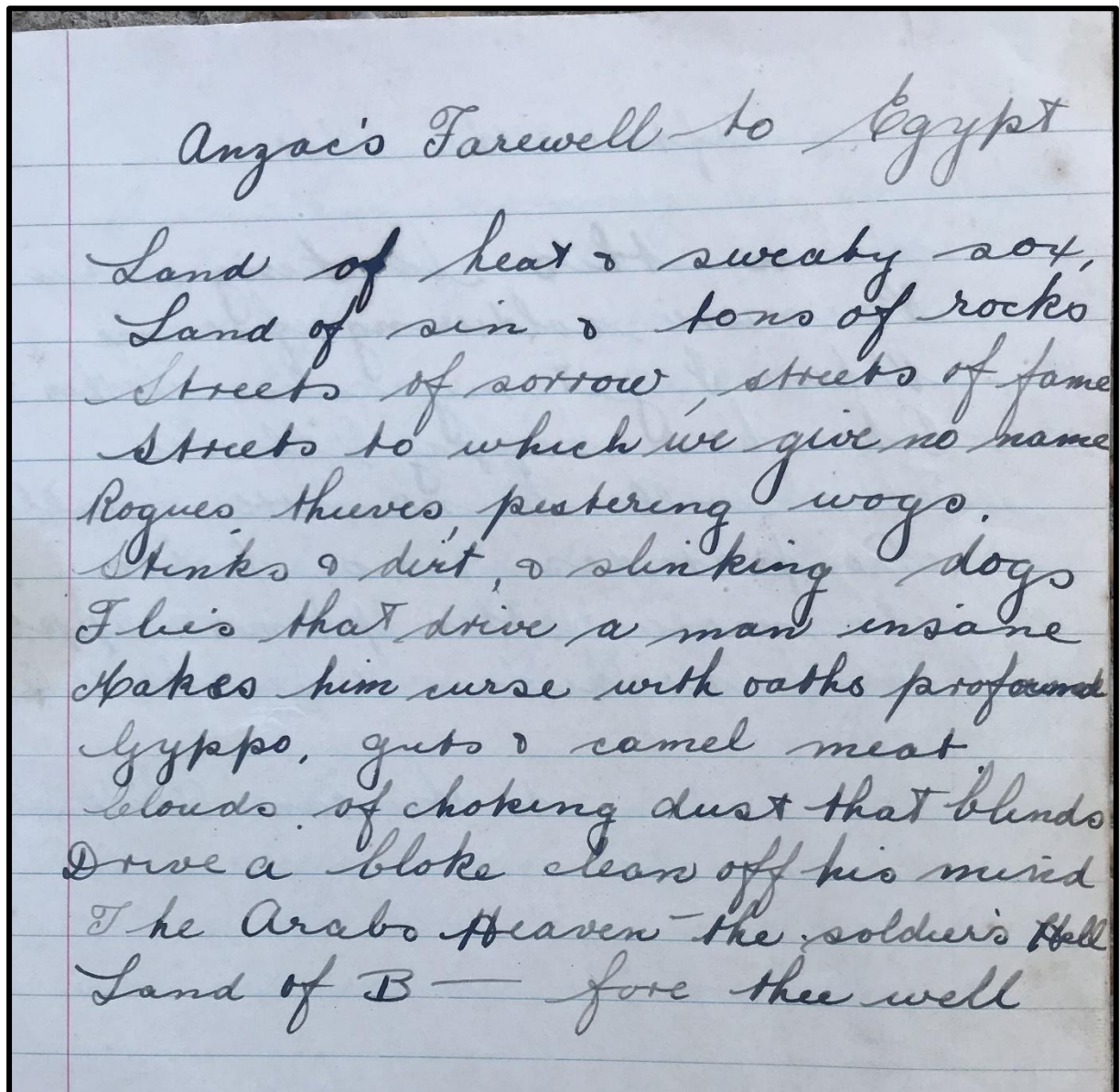


A knocked out tank. Dug and Bill Fleming.



Timaru Railway Station.

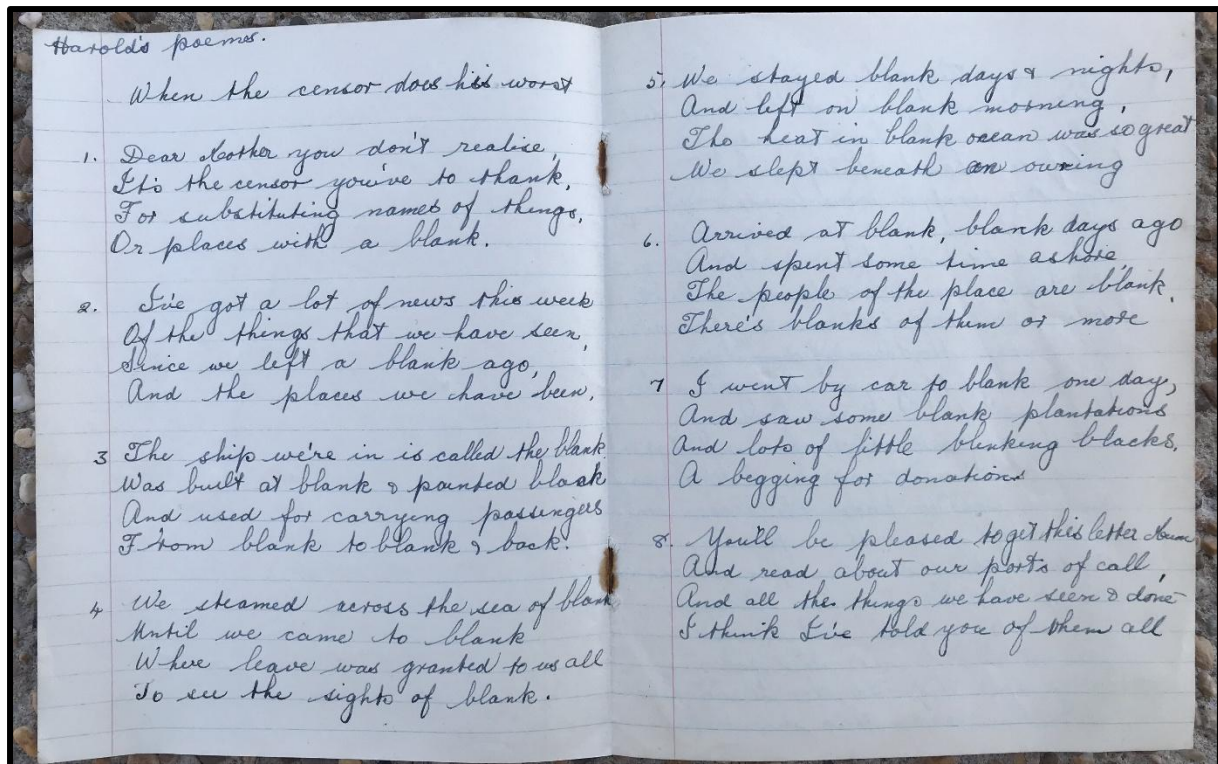
Harolds poems



After the War.

When this blinking war is over
No more soldiering for me
When I get my civic clothes on
Oh how happy I'll be
There will be no more revallie
No parades & no tatto
No more rotten plums & apples.
Macconarchie's or Irish stew,

To the tune Abide with me



1. Dear Mother, you don't realise
it's the censor you've to thank
For substituting names of things,
Or places with a blank.

2. I've got a lot of news this week
Of the things that we have seen
Since we left a blank ago,
And the places we have been.

3. The ships we is called the blank
Was built at blank & painted at blank.
And used for carrying passengers
From blank to blank & blank.

4. We steamed across the sea of blank
Until we came to blank
Where leave was granted to us all
To see the sights of blank.

5. We stayed blank days & nights,
And left on blank morning,
The heat in blank ocean was so great we
slept beneath an awning.

6. Arrived at blank, blank days ago
And spent some time ashore
The people of the place are blank.
There's blank of them or more.

7. I went by car to blank one day,
And saw some blank plantations
And lots of little blanking blacks,
A begging for donations.

8. You'll be pleased to get this letter Mom
and read about our ports of call And all the
things we have seen a done
I think I've told you of them all.

USEFUL WEB LINKS FOR REFERENCE:

1. [Auckland War Memorial Museum - Online Cenotaph](#)
 - A comprehensive database of New Zealand service personnel.
2. [New Zealand War Graves Project](#)
 - Contains images and information about New Zealand war graves and memorials around the world.
3. [New Zealand History - NZ Wars and Conflicts](#)
 - Provides detailed accounts and images of New Zealand's involvement in
 - various wars, including WW1 and WW2.
4. [Archives New Zealand - War History](#)
 - Access to war-related records and images held by Archives New Zealand.
5. [Te Papa Tongarewa - Collections Online](#)

Features war-related collections, including personal stories and photographs of New Zealand soldiers

DATA SOURCE AND COPYRIGHT INFORMATION

All information and images included in this document have been sourced from various archives, databases, and personal contributions. The primary sources include:

- Daughter Olwyn Whitehouse – Lois Shears
- South Canterbury Genealogy Society
- Auckland War Memorial Museum - Online Cenotaph
- New Zealand War Graves Project

The content is provided for educational and research purposes. If you have any questions or require further information regarding the sources or usage rights, please contact SC Genealogy directly.

Contact Information:

South Canterbury (SC) Genealogy

Website: <https://scgenealogy.nz/>

Email: info@scgenealogy.nz

Phone: *[Your Contact Number, remove if you do NOT want your contact details published]*

Please respect the copyright and usage rights of the original sources. Unauthorised reproduction or distribution of this content without permission of the owner and SC Genealogy may violate copyright laws.